

RAN SASKATCHEWAN REPRESENTATIVE AREAS NETWORK

PROGRESS REPORT 2002

SASKATCHEWAN'S LIVING LANDSCAPES

Saskatchewan is a province of varied landscapes, from rolling prairie in the south to forest vistas in the north. Before the arrival of the European settler the people of the province lived in harmony with the land. But now Saskatchewan has one of the most altered landscapes in the world. Much of the province is still being altered by various land use activities and many of the province's landscapes are being changed or, in some cases, lost.

Over the past few years, Saskatchewan, through the leadership of Saskatchewan Environment, has been preserving representative examples of our landscapes for future generations. This is being done through a network of ecologically important lands and waters. These areas, which represent the province's varied landscapes and biological resources, form a network called the Representative Areas Network. The foundation of the Representative Areas Network is the parks and wildlife lands that were already set aside. They feature unique and interesting landscapes as well as provide areas for recreational activities. The original area set aside totaled nearly three million hectares (7.4 million acres). Over the past four years the area included in the Representative Areas Network has nearly doubled. Today more than five million hectares (12.4 million acres), or just over eight per cent of the province, has been recognized or designated as part of the Representative Areas Network.

Representative Areas Network sites have been selected to compliment existing sites found in our parks and wildlife lands and to fulfill two major roles as part of Saskatchewan Environment's newly adopted ecosystem based management:

- ▶ to serve as benchmarks or long-term reference points that can be used to measure the impact of management practices being applied outside of the Network; and
- ▶ to conserve samples of the range of biological diversity found in Saskatchewan.



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LAND STATUS

The Representative Areas Network is very flexible in the tools that can be used to ensure the ecological values within each ecoregion are conserved. In general, protection and management depends on ownership of the lands being protected.

Crown Lands: Lands administered by Saskatchewan Environment may be managed according to any one of a number of legislative options. A Crown land representative area may be formally designated pursuant to ***The Ecological Reserves Act, The Parks Act, or The Wildlife Act.*** Designation usually includes protection for the mineral resources through a Crown Mineral Reserve.

Private Lands and Lands not Administered by Saskatchewan Environment: Lands not directly under the control of Saskatchewan Environment are also important to the Network. By entering into joint partnerships, Memoranda of Understanding or Conservation Easements, the program is able to work with its partners to guide management of these lands in a way that will ensure the long-term conservation of these lands. Overall responsibility for the land and the mineral resources remains with the land-owning agency or individual.



NETWORK ADDITIONS

Between April 1, 2000 and September 2002, more than one million hectares of land were recognized or designated as part of the Representative Areas Network. These diverse areas range from native grasslands in the south to forested ecosystems in the north.

August 2000 - Six sites in the Amisk-Atik Land Use Planning area totaling over 100,000 hectares were designated. These sites include Jan Lake (33,038 ha.), the Sturgeon-Weir River (4,610 ha.), Perry Lake (39,812 ha.), Mari Lake (31,658 ha.), Haldorson Bay (6,637 ha.) and the Amisk Lake (1,706 ha.) representative areas. All of these important upland forest sites are in either the Mid-boreal Lowland Ecoregion or the Churchill River Upland Ecoregion. Many of the sites are associated with water or riparian areas and, as such, are very diverse.

August 2000 - Selenite Point, including Shelter Island on Smoothstone Lake, protects 3,810 ha. of old growth forest which is an important breeding area for migratory songbirds. The Doré - Smoothstone Lakes area has some of the largest and most diverse breeding populations of songbirds found in Saskatchewan.

May 2001 - Three Special Management Areas in the far north protect over 600,000 hectares of land in the two most northern ecoregions. These Special Management Areas have been set aside for a period of ten years while final boundaries for the sites (Tazin Lake 125,085 ha., Chappuis/Fontaine 240,332 ha, and Misaw Lake 236,566 ha.) are being discussed with local people as part of the Athabasca Basin Land Use Planning process.

March 2002 - Over 320,000 hectares in the Provincial Community Pasture System were recognized as contributing to the goals of the Representative Areas Network. A Letter of Understanding recognizes the good management of the pastures by patrons and Saskatchewan Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization. The agreement includes recognition that the pastures will continue to be managed in a manner that maintains their ecological integrity.

September 2002 - Twelve new Representative Area Ecological Reserves were designated. Two of the sites are located in the Doré-Smoothstone Lakes area. The Budd Lake site (17,924 ha.) protects a unique riparian area in the north-central part of Saskatchewan important for nesting songbirds. The Caribou Flats site (10,067 ha.) protects an area of old growth forest. This area is important for songbirds and for woodland caribou. The remaining ten sites, which total 15,256 hectares, are located on the east side of the province in the Pasquia Porcupine Hills. The sites and their sizes are listed below:

Fir River	4,401 ha.
Greenbush River	2,555 ha.
Little Armit River	474 ha.
Lower Armit River	60 ha.
Nitenai Salt Marsh	579 ha.
North Armit River	95 ha.
Overflowing River	550 ha.
Pasquia River	5,295 ha.
Red Deer River	299 ha.
Upper Armit River	948 ha.

These sites are representative of the Mid-boreal Lowland Ecoregion and provide protection for various wildlife species including provincially rare plants.

Representative Areas Network of Saskatchewan



- Ecological Reserves
- Special Management Areas
- Provincial Parks
- Parkland Reserves
- Wildlife Refuges
- Provincial Community Pastures
- CFD Dundurn Site
- Migratory Bird Sanctuaries
- National Parks
- PFRA Lands
- PCS Rocanville
- Ducks Unlimited Canada
- Conservation Easements
- WHPA Lands
- SWCC Lands
- FWDF Lands

Natural Ecoregion Boundaries

- A - Selwyn Lake Upland
- B - Tazin Lake Upland
- C - Athabasca Plain
- D - Churchill River Upland
- E - Mid-Boreal Uplands
- F - Mid-Boreal Lowland
- G - Boreal Transition
- H - Aspen Parkland
- K - Moist Mixed Grassland
- M - Mixed Grassland
- N - Cypress Upland

This map is to be used for graphical representation only.

This is not a legal document.



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WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

The province, under the leadership of Saskatchewan Environment, remains committed to identifying and designating lands to be included in the Representative Areas Network. The initial analysis and selection of final sites needed for the network is complete. These proposed sites are now being brought forward for public discussion prior to the finalization of boundaries, acceptable activities and designation. However, in order to obtain as much public input and support as possible for site selection, designation and management, some discussions to resolve local issues may require additional time to complete.

Several eco-regions remain under-represented in the Network and it will be a priority for the Network to achieve this representation. Sites in various phases of the designation process include:

	Approximate Size
Churchill River Upland	
Cree Lake	161,002 ha.
Geikie River	27,357 ha.
Pink Lake	315,187 ha.
Mid-boreal Upland	
Firebag Lake	387,677 ha.
Mid-boreal Lowland	
Lobstick Lake	89,370 ha.

Given the importance of public input in determining final site boundaries, the approximate sizes indicated above are subject to change. Additional smaller sites may also be identified over time to address gaps in the Network. These sites will be discussed in a broader public forum on an ongoing basis as gaps in representation are identified. Completion of the designation process will result in a Network of sites protecting some 6.5 million hectares or approximately 10 per cent of the province.

Saskatchewan is pleased with the progress in developing a Representative Areas Network. We are making strides in meeting commitments to the rest of Canada to help complete a national network of protected areas. The next important step in the Representative Areas Network is living up to the challenge of caring for the sites to ensure that their beauty, distinctiveness and wealth of resources are maintained as integral parts of our living landscape.

Saskatchewan's Representative Areas Network success has been partly due to the funding the program receives through the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund. The hunters, trappers and anglers of the province should be proud that their contributions to the fund are helping to conserve many important Saskatchewan landscapes.

If you would like to learn more about the Representative Areas Network in Saskatchewan, or if you have comments or suggestions that will assist our efforts, please contact:

Fish and Wildlife Branch
Saskatchewan Environment
Room 436
3211 Albert Street
Regina, Saskatchewan S4S 5W6

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